

Message Text

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PAGE 01 STATE 041458
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FM SECSTATE WASHDC
TO AMEMBASSY ROME
AMEMBASSY CAIRO
INFO AMEMBASSY LONDON

S E C R E T STATE 041458

NODIS

E.O. 11652: GDS

TAGS: MASS, EG, US, UK, IT

SUBJECT: REHABILITATION OF EGYPT'S MIG-21 FLEET

REF: A. STATE 35740, B. ROME 2775 (NOTAL)

1. BESCHER OF G.E. TOLD DEPARTMENT OFFICER FEBRUARY 15 THAT OFFICIALS OF ITALIAN COUNTERPART (PRESUMABLY ALFA-ROMEO) HAVE EXPRESSED DISSATISFACTION WITH GOE DECISION ON MIG-21 PROGRAM. ACCORDING TO BESCHER, ITALIANS FEEL THAT "U.S. COMPANIES AND STATE DEPARTMENT MISINFORMED THEM AND MISDIRECTED THEM; NOW WE ARE ABANDONING THEM AT A CRITICAL TIME PERIOD..." NONETHELESS, ITALIANS ALLEGEDLY BELIEVE THAT DECISION IS "FROZEN" PENDING "NEW DIRECTION FROM THE TOP". ACCORDINGLY, ITALIAN COMPANIES WERE PRESS-
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ING TO HAVE THIS MATTER RAISED IN DISCUSSIONS BETWEEN ANDREOTTI AND SADAT (REFTEL B REPORTS SAME POSSIBILITY).

2. FOR ROME: WE WOULD BE INTERESTED IN ANY INFORMATION WHICH EMBASSY MAY OBTAIN ON WHETHER THIS MATTER WAS DISCUSSED WHEN SADAT WAS IN ITALY, AND, IF SO, WITH WHAT

RESULTS. WE WISH TO AVOID APPROACHING ITALIAN GOVERNMENT IN SUCH WAY AS TO GIVE THE IMPRESSION THAT USG ACTIVELY INTERESTED IN KEEPING THIS CASE ALIVE.

3. FOR CAIRO: PLEASE ASCERTAIN WHETHER CONTRACTS HAVE BEEN SIGNED WITH BRITISH OR, CONVERSELY, WHETHER THIS IS STILL AN OPEN CASE. IF LATTER, WILL THERE BE A NEW BIDDING PROCESS? IF SO, WILL SPECIFICATIONS BE DRAWN IN SUCH A WAY THAT COMPETING FIRMS (INCLUDING ITALIAN/AMERICAN CONSORTIA) WILL ALL BE WORKING ON SAME BASES IN SUBMITTING BIDS?

4. AGAIN, WE DO NOT WANT TO GIVE IMPRESSION TO GOE THAT USG IS TRYING TO INFLUENCE EGYPTIAN ACTION ON THIS MATTER. HOWEVER, WE FEEL SOME RESPONSIBILITY TO G.E., LOCKHEED AND THEIR RESPECTIVE ITALIAN COUNTERPARTS IF THE GOE DECISION IS LESS DEFINITIVE THAN EARLIER REPORTED. IN THIS CASE, WE WOULD HOPE THAT ANY RECONSIDERATION BY EAF WOULD BE STRUCTURED SO AS TO PERMIT ALL COMPETITORS TO FORMULATE BIDS BASED ON STANDARD REQUIREMENTS. VANCE

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NNN

*** Current Handling Restrictions *** n/a

*** Current Classification *** SECRET

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